

## REPORT

FROM

### THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

IN ANSWER TO

*A resolution of the Senate of December 18, 1845, relative to the erection of a light-house near Fort Mifflin, in the Delaware river.*

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JANUARY 7, 1846.

Read, referred to the Committee on Commerce, and ordered to be printed.

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
January 6, 1846.

SIR: In obedience to a resolution of the Senate, "directing the Secretary of the Treasury to communicate such information as he can obtain in regard to the expediency of erecting a light on the stone pier in the river Delaware near Fort Mifflin," I have the honor to report, that the navigation of the Delaware is represented to be difficult and dangerous by reason of the numerous islands and shoals—the narrow channel and flat shores of the river in the neighborhood of Fort Mifflin. The danger is increased by the fact that the pier referred to in the resolution is nearly covered at high water, and by the liability of vessels going into and out of the Schuylkill river to run upon it in dark and foggy weather.

In the opinion of the collectors at Philadelphia and Wilmington, and according to the concurring testimony of many owners and masters of steamboats, and of pilots intimately acquainted with the navigation of the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, a light at the point designated in the resolution would add much to the security of the navigation, and essentially benefit the trade and commerce of Philadelphia.

I enclose copies of all the communications made to the department on the subject.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

R. J. WALKER,

Secretary of the Treasury.

HON. GEORGE M. DALLAS,

Vice President of the United States,  
and President of the Senate.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,  
*District of Philadelphia, December 22, 1845.*

SIR: Your letter of the 19th, enclosing a resolution of the Senate of the 18th, requesting information as to the expediency of erecting a light-house on the stone pier in the river Delaware, near Fort Mifflin, has been received.

And in reply thereto, I have the honor to state, that I have consulted several experienced mariners on the subject, who are perfectly familiar with the navigation of the river Delaware, and they all concur in the opinion that owing to the flatness of the shores in the vicinity of Fort Mifflin, and the river being interspersed with islands and shoals, its navigation there is rendered difficult and dangerous in the night time, and that a light-house at the point designated in the resolution would be essentially serviceable to the commerce and navigation of the river Delaware.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY HORN, *Collector.*

Hon. R. J. WALKER,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,  
*District of Philadelphia, December 29, 1845.*

SIR: In addition to my letter of the 22d, on the subject of erecting a light-house on the stone pier in the Delaware, near Fort Mifflin, I now have the honor to enclose you a letter signed by twenty-four pilots employed on the river Delaware, addressed to Joshua Emlen, Esq., chairman of the board of underwriters of this city, which has just been handed to me for the purpose of being forwarded to you.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY HORN, *Collector.*

Hon. R. J. WALKER,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

[Copy of letter enclosed with the above.]

PHILADELPHIA, *December 25, 1845.*

DEAR SIR: We, the undersigned, pilots of the bay and river Delaware, are of the opinion that there should be piers constructed on the eastern side of Reedy island as a harbor for vessels in the winter season, for the following reasons, viz: Vessels drawing 16 feet water cannot get inside of the island unless it is high water. They cannot leave the inside until it is high tide and a fair wind, or must lay outside exposed to the ice. There is, likewise, a large flat ground below the island, with not more than 12 inches water at low tide. At the commencement of the flood, the tide raises the ice from the flats, and drifts it inside of the island. The inside, by the piers being repaired, would make an excellent harbor for vessels drawing 11 feet water and under, as they can come through the inside channel, which vessels of a greater draught cannot.

Newcastle is not a safe harbor, owing to the stone piers, and they being so far from the main land that the drift ice comes between them. Chester harbor has filled up so that large vessels cannot make a safe harbor. *It would be a great advantage to the steamers and vessels going in and out the Schuylkill in the night, to erect a light-house on the fort pier, and the pier to be built up above high water mark.*

We remain yours, &c.,

Wm. Marshall,  
Joseph Way,  
Philip Hand,  
Wm. Jeffers,  
Wm. West,  
John Fuller,  
David J. Marshall,  
David Rowland,  
John Stephens,  
Wm. T. Eldridge,  
Henry Ridon,  
Jacob A. Marshall,

John Stewart,  
Edward Maull,  
Jeremiah Bennett,  
Wm. Edwards, Jr.,  
Memucan Hughes,  
Wm. F. Edwards,  
Wm. Baker,  
John Kelly,  
John Saunders,  
James Wilson,  
George D. Hoffner,  
John Norman.

MR. JOSHUA EMLEN.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE,  
January 2, 1846.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th ult. enclosing a copy of a resolution of the Senate dated the 18th ult. calling upon you for information regarding the expediency of erecting a light on the stone pier in the river Delaware, near Fort Mifflin, and instructing me to communicate to you any information I may possess in relation to the work proposed in the resolution. In reply, I now enclose to you a letter from Captain Whilldin, of Philadelphia, the owner of three steamboats on the Delaware, with a larger experience as a steamboat captain than any other man that pursues that business, and whose views, as you will perceive, have been concurred in by several steamboat captains and proprietors of packets, whose general standing in society commends their opinions, on this occasion, to respectful consideration. I also enclose a letter received from Captain Fuller, of Philadelphia, in reply to mine addressed him on the same subject, and which, from his long acquaintance with the bay and river Delaware, and his pursuits in life, peculiarly qualifies him to afford the information desired. He is an old and experienced pilot, and for the last three or four years has had charge of the supply boat belonging to this district, and, in the execution of his duties, visits, periodically, all the light-houses, light boats, and buoys in our district.

In the views expressed in the several letters enclosed, I entirely concur, and have no doubt that a light erected on the pier, near Fort Mifflin, would contribute greatly to facilitate the navigation of that part of the river, and be peculiarly beneficial to persons engaged in the Schuylkill coal trade.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY HICKS, *Collector.*

HON. R. J. WALKER,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*

[Copies of letters enclosed with the foregoing.]

PHILADELPHIA, *December 24, 1845.*

DEAR SIR: At your desire, I give you my views in regard to the necessity of a light-house being placed on the pier opposite Fort Mifflin. I think it would be of great advantage to the steamers running at night, and likewise to vessels going in and out of the Schuylkill; as the pier at present is nearly covered at high water, and the channel being very narrow, they are liable to run on the pier without perceiving their danger until it is too late. I will likewise state, that the channel in the mouth of Wilmington creek is filling up—the mud from the marsh settles in the mouth of the creek at flood and ebb tides; and if there are not piers constructed each side of the creek at its mouth, to extend out and deepen the creek at its mouth, it will retard the progress of Wilmington, which is now in a flourishing state, by having her watercourse not attended to in time. With such views,

I remain your obedient servant,

JOHN FULLER.

HENRY HICKS, Esq.,

*Superintendent of Delaware bay and river.*

PHILADELPHIA, *December 26, 1845.*

DEAR SIR: In answer to yours of the 23d instant, with respect to the pier opposite Fort Mifflin, I can only say, that in its present condition I consider it dangerous to vessels, being covered at high water and liable to be run upon in thick weather. Its repair is much needed, and the addition of a light on it would be of service to vessels both on the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers.

I am yours respectfully,

WILMON WHILLDIN.

HENRY HICKS, Esq.,

*Collector at Wilmington, Delaware.*

Concurrence in the above expressed by

JOHN L. ROBESON,  
WILSON PEIRSON,

*Steamboat Belivar.*

JACOB DOUGLASS,

*Steamboat Robert Morris.*

JAMES P. MERRIHEW,

*Master of Wilmington packet Mary Ann.*

ABEL STOKES,

*Master sloop Planter.*

D. & GEO. BUSH,

*Proprietors Wilmington and Philadelphia packets.*

CHARLES WARNER,

*Proprietor steamboat E. J. Dupont.*